

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:7099
ANSWERED ON:14.05.2002
G M FOODS
S. SAIDUZZAMAN

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the safety of GM foods has been questioned by the scientists and there is a strong movement against the use of such foods;
- (b) if so, whether GM Soyabeans have been imported;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government have initiated any remedial steps in this regard;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT)

(a) Genetically Modified (GM) foods are released after proper safety assessment. In some countries scientists and NGOs have raised questions especially from the viewpoint of consumers' choice on GM foods. As per the present knowledge, safety of GM food depends upon the genes and the nucleic acid sequence used in making the transgenic organisms that have been grown for food use. Safe sequences have been generally used to produce safe foods. Where sequences used are novel and new, scientific experiments on their safety are conducted.

(b) & (c) The Government of India, so far, has not accorded permission for import of GM soybean for commercial release. However, permission was given for import of GM soybean seeds for conducting R&D work. The Government is yet to accord permission for bio-safety studies on the imported GM soybean.

(d)(e) & (f) Indian Biosafety guidelines formulated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Rules -1989 are exhaustive and adequate to assess the risk, if any, emanating from the development of GM foods. A transgenic containment facility has already been set up at National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi for testing and quarantine purposes. For allowing the use of GM foods, the national regulatory procedures would be followed as and when they are released for consumption.